

**Salem Free Public Library
Poetry Contest Winners
2013**

Child, Aged 6-8

First Prize

Empire Penguin

By Samuel Yang, Salem, CT

Empire penguin,
As cute as can be.
Big, fat, white bellies,
Great for belly sliding.
Great for storing food.

Empire penguin,
Big, black, bright eyes
Looking for fish, squid, and krill
And watch out for seal, sea lion and killer whale.

Empire penguin,
Cute orange beaks as orange as pumpkin pie,
And the top half is as black as zebras black stripes.
And as sharp as the tip of a falcon's talons.

Swim, swim, swim with big flippers.
Warm, warm, warm under the blubber.
Up, up, up straight stands 45 feet tall.

Waddles with feet,
And chicks stay warm on feet.
Huddle, huddle together
Warm, warm, warm as love as can be.

Second Prize

A Fat Cat

by Kayleigh Jensen, Salem, CT

There is	Cat
a cat.	fat, fat.
A fat	A cat
Fat	is
cat.	there.

Third Prize

Fun Things

by Ozias Ostrander, Salem

Parties are fun
Games are fun
Sports are fun too.
Playing outside is fun
Hiking is fun
And so are you.

Third Prize

Dogs

by Jack Jensen, Salem, CT

Dogs
Great
Tall and small
Gruffy, scruffy, fluffy
Respectful and wild
Funny
Dogs

Honorable Mention: Sports by Marcus Ostrander, Salem, CT

Child, Aged 9-11

First Prize

Butcher's Dog

by Sabrina Tolppi, Waterford, CT

All he does
is wait
for the
sausage necklace
to be strung
around
his taste buds

Second Prize

Mixed Up

by Abby Hanney, Salem, CT

I'm a horridle reaber anb writer
It gives my bab dig fits on my Bs anb Ds
People say I'm mixeb up,
But I just think I'm me

I'w a horrible reader and mriter
It gives wy wow big fits on my Ws and Ms
People say I'w wixed up,
But I'w just we

I'w a horridle reaber and mriter
It gives wy wow and bab fits
Now that I'w looking at wy mriting
I adwit, I aw wixeb up!

Third Prize

Soaring

by Michelle Shavnya, East Lyme, CT

As I reached for that golden sheet of paper,
An idea flashed in my mind
To create an intricate design of a beautiful bird
That would be
Soaring through the air
Forgetting what's been done wrong,
Forgetting every single problem faced,
Forgetting most difficult moments
But instead,
Proudly making its way through the air,
Ignoring shortcomings, mistakes, and regrets,
Just flying on and on and on
Endlessly through the air.
Enjoying life,
Being happy,
Feeling overjoyed.
Life is just too short
To cry, to suffer, to regret,
To feel terrible
And remember all the wrongs.

Third Prize

Thought

by Josh Fresco-Hawes, Salem, CT

A jumbled mess
of words
fighting to get
out
rearing
writhing
whipping
lashing
striking
stabbing
beating my
head
until I write

a poem
the thoughts
seep through
the paper
and disappear

Honorable Mention: Glorious Chocolate by Delanie Fresco-Hawes, Salem, CT

Honorable Mention: Naomi Pepperoni and Deami Salami by Deami Ostrander, Salem, CT

Honorable Mention: Mystery by Morgan Vane, Salem, CT

Teen, Aged 12-14

First Prize

Cloud

by Lauren Harrington, Niantic, CT

The woman in the wedding dress
Floats in the sky
Dancing to her lover.

When he doesn't appear
She makes her sadness
Known to everyone.

Dress darkening,
Despair swelling,
Until her tears fall down
Upon the world.

Second Prize

Hatred

by Anne Look, Salem, CT

A venom,
fouler than Sin,
bitter as Defeat,
condescending as Fate;
preying on
Innocence,

Fear,
and
Insecurity.

With an unsatiated hunger,
it destroys its targets
with every last bit of malice it possesses;
craving
the brains of Knowledge,
or the façade of Beauty.
The hunt is
tedious,
never-ending.

When at last the demolition is through,
it smirks with demonic pleasure,
and leaves a scorching trail behind.
It then moves onto its next victims,
creating havoc like a plague.
No mercy.

Third Prize

Song

by Aleigha Price, Salem, CT

What is a song?
Is it the sweet symphony of an orchestra,
or the sweet symphony of a free soul?
Maybe, a song is the way of the wolf,
and a gust of wind howl in unison.
Or the way the first rain in the Sahara falls so bitterly sweetly,
like a sun kissed stream gleaming in the stiff air.
Maybe a song is the picture perfect moments that dance before our
eyes,
and vanish.
Or could it be the beating of a snare drum, and a billowing flag in
the wind
symbolizing freedom?
No
When you hear a song, a meaningful song,
it's a description of the way of life.
A song can't define or clarify us.
Instead, a song tells the way it is,

in a perspective that's all around us.
It's in fact time itself twisting and turning,
like a DNA replica.
Everything that is, or was, began with a song.
So what's a song?
A song,
is us.

Honorable Mention: To the Beginning by Julia Robson, Salem, CT

Honorable Mention: Through Times of Terror by Michael Flaherty, North Franklin, CT

Honorable Mention: Ripping in Reverse by Cynthia Gluck, Franklin, CT

Honorable Mention: Free by Megan Aldrich

Teen, Aged 15-18 – 2 First Prize Winners!

First Prize

Yes
by Ben Ostrowski, Niantic, CT

I ate PB&J and cookies and milk and candy on Halloween and hamburgers and hot dogs
and not vegetables and cupcakes at Hartney's party and went to the beach and built
sandcastles and moats and walls and holes and skipped rocks and climbed rocks and
threw rocks all the way to the third buoy and swam to the raft and jumped off and
touched the bottom of the sea and touched a moon jelly and swam back and got tired and
laid in the sand and asked God if I could fly and He said yes

First Prize

Love, Granddaughter
by Jessica Kenny, Niantic, CT

Flowers on the grave and a few prayers said,
Laid underground in your eternal bed.
All the cars have left and the mourners gone home,
The peace that was promised for your spirit to roam.
But rest assured I will be alright.
If you ever have the chance to come visit through the light,
You may not recognize the girl that you see,
For I feel that that girl is no longer me.
My hair still as brown, my eyes still as green,
The paint on my nails still the last that you've seen.

My voice is still singing and my legs still run,
I still think of you before each race that I've won.
The change that has surfaced only you could see,
For it's taken its root deep inside of me.
I'm no longer that little girl, so anxious and scared,
I have a confidence now that has made me prepared.
In those last few weeks you could barely be heard,
But the strength you displayed was more powerful than words.
And that is how I've learned to move on,
Some people speak louder after they're gone.

Second Prize

Anything

by Nikki McComiskey, Uncasville, CT

If I were to give anything, it would be this:
I'd give you a kiss,
And steal the smoke off your lips
And the alcohol from your breath.
I would cradle your face and play with your hair
And diminish the thought that love is in the air
Because it's not: it's here;
In the way your tired eyes look through mine
And the wrinkles they form when you laugh.
It's in the way you take my hand
And the way I take yours back.
It's in the dimples that appear when you smile at me
And the way you push your hair out of your face.
It's the way the night envelopes us whole
And how gentle the wind blows the leaves away.
It's really in the way we're still standing here,
I the lock and you the key.
And if I were to *truly* give you anything,
I would gladly give you me.

Second Prize

What About The 15th?

by Joseph Rosen, Ledyard, CT

Four years have worn us down to shifting dust.
Foes? Just friends? What does a label show?
We, bicycles of old, spotted with rust,
Roll through the weather, learning to let go.

Bad habits and deceptive nostalgia.
Settling, misplacing trust, falling out.
Housing truth in my throat, influenza.
Riding the rails together, no clear route.

Blind to current restrictions, call it hope
Or give me definition, something new.
Burnt-out from small talk with a narrow scope.
You are distant and biting, I love you.

When I am brave, my spine straight, my clothes sewed.
You remain still a house in a snow globe.

Third Prize

Winter Spring

by Molly Bennett, Salem, CT

One flake aloft, way up high
Only on dancing in the sky.
Soundless, soft, slow

Downward

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The snow.

Glistening wet, it lands on my face.
Doesn't last long, it melts in place.

You are innocent as just one flake
But combined with others, many storms you make.

A blanket of snow, soft and deep
Covers the land, as it sleeps
Just like that comes the end of the frost
Winter will soon be officially lost.

Green starts peaking from under the snow
Animals too come out from below.
Icicles drip and fade in the sun
Here Spring is, it has finally begun!

Third Prize

Cancer

by Rachel Belanger, Salem, CT

There is a time when the happiness will fade
Not completely, but enough to make you want to cry
For the person slowly slipping away
If I had known that would be the last time I would see you, I would
have said goodbye
I noticed an hour late you had left
I hope you know we came back to visit
But you were tired and hurting
The clock was ticking and your days were numbered
My goodbye still hung loose in the air
Maybe it would stay like that forever
I thought about you everyday
The one day I didn't, the phone rang
I wanted to cry, but I couldn't
Because I still had time to say it
A two week wait that felt like a year
When the snow storm came I want you to know we tried
We tried so hard to make it past the infuriating flakes
But we couldn't make it to your funeral
The roads were shut down and so was my last chance
We were stuck
That was the painful day I learned there would be no goodbyes for
us

Honorable Mention: From Then to Now by Temari Lee, Salem, CT

Adult

First Prize

Peace Hymn

by Michael J. Cronin, Norwich, CT

A drop of blood in a sea of sand,
A small warm heart in a heartless land;
Beneath the veil of a thousand stars
A child cries for peace.

A mother holds her newborn son;
Three Wisemen seek a Chosen One;
Beneath the rays of a portent star
A child cries for peace.

Peace within my heart;
Peace cradled by my words;
The breath of peace becomes a gust
And then a mighty wind.
The hope of peace,
An act of peace
Reveals the God within.

A soldier guards a foreign gate;
A world away a young wife waits.
Beneath the glow of those self-same stars
Their child cries for peace.

Peace within my heart;
Peace cradled by my words;
The breath of peace becomes a gust
And then a mighty wind.
The hope of peace,
An act of peace
Reveals the God within.

Second Prize

No Places Left To Bleed **by Rosemarie Neilson, Norwich, CT**

Hunched over the steering wheel waiting at the light the horns let out the blast
Caught in the middle of time, memories flying in the windows with cornfields passing
By rows of baled hay laying in the fields of rice paddies bullets skimming the stretch of
Bloodied bodies broken young men before their prime he wonders when it will end

Plenty of blood he tells himself; barely moving from the last skirmish no feeling left in
His legs: seeing the flag waving not for him but for the coffins sent on borrowed time to
Places like Nebraska, Kansas and Omaha City, tens of thousands blond haired young
Soldiers laid to rest in bloodied fields in places like Alamein, Laos, and Omaha Beaches

Stained red with youth not ready to die not ready to see the faces of God in the
Killing fields of bold young men in tribute to the nine eleens of the world laying in close
Formation bodies side by side at Tet the Karmir [sic] Rouge bled lifeless souls just weaned
Of mother's milk to use their blood for the able bodied soldiers filling the ranks with

Borrowed youth lining the bunkers in close formation marking the crosses in fields of
Poppies in view at Gettesburg [sic] Lynchburg and Sumnter [sic] raising the stripes the stars the
Heroes with hearts of purple on Mystic land and Wounded Knee burning the teepees
With children inside to keep them from freezing 'burn them alive' echoed the rankings

Dashing the hopes of pledges for peace wasting the souls no longer existing swallowed
Waters bloodied with marrow washed in vessels hewn of hard lumber carried on bent
Backs of burrowed transport down broke mountains hollowed of healing firs and balsam
Slaughtered lean and un adorned in hallowed halls and legions in fields of heroes bourn

Here lies the babies mourned in our Nation the city Newtown all broken in boxes with
Thousands of shells marking the breathing cloistered forever in time at their dying here lie
The innocents here lie the timeless here lie the families severed of children as
Spent casings litter the barren hallways forcing decisions pleading for safety seeking in

Amnesty seeking tolerance seeking patience seeking the shadows walking the halls
Praying for us in our feigned resistance praying for us in our shattered indulgence praying
For us in our righteous politics the 5th commandment or the 1st amendment whichever it be
Let us honor the children let us honor the families shattered of children carried in boxes

Third Prize

Tide Pool

by Nan-Ellen Zyrlis, New London, CT

Fingers of water
inch slowly forward on the tide
and fill the shallow depression
between rocks and sand.

When the tide recedes
a small pool remains
that beckons my toddlers.

When I show them
tiny crabs and water spiders
drawn from the rocks,
they exclaim with delight.

They want to wade.
I, worried that they'll
slip or be bitten,
encourage them to kneel
at the edge and
venture no more than fingers.

A small fish surfaces,
left behind. It
cannot survive
until the next tide in the
ever-shallowing water.

My sons scoop him up
in a sand-pail
and trudge, side by side,
pail heavy between them,
to the water's edge.

Where, releasing
him gently,
they say their goodbyes.

Oh that I can
be so graceful

when it's their turn
to follow the tide
from the pool to wide wild seas.

Third Prize

The Embrace

by Hugo DeSarro, East Hampton, CT

Let me tell you about Herb and Helen Hunt.
It's a story worth repeating. They had been
married fifty years and had become obstinate
and taciturn with the passing years; living in
estrangement and indifference, devoid of tenderness
and affection. He seldom spoke without gruffness,
she grew tight-lipped and withdrawn.

Life might have continued for them like that
to the very end – austere, barren of feeling.
It so often does for the elderly.
But, one evening, Herb found himself idly
looking at her, and he saw something
in her faded eyes that tugged at his heart,
and a sudden sadness came over him.
He thought of their many years together;
the good and the bad times they shared;
the loyalty and service she had provided him,
and his heart was filled with a strange affection.
The feeling was sudden and it possessed him.
He saw the goodness in her and the girl she had
once been and love for her overwhelmed him.

He knelt on knee and embraced her,
scarcely realizing what he was doing.
She was caught by surprise and at first
drew back alarmed. Then she saw the love
in his eyes and her heart was filled with warmth
she had never known before, not even when young
and in full bloom. In that magic moment,
after a fifty-year delay, they surrendered their hearts.

Honorable Mention: The Secret Season by Michele Snitkin, Niantic, CT

**Honorable Mention: The Nocturnals, The Subterraneans, The Quiet Ones by Anna
Thompson, Waterford, CT**